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# *The* CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

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*New Code For Nuns  
Rotary Barred to  
Catholic Clergy*

MARCH, 1951

# THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

Edited by former Roman Catholic Priests

"When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—Luke xxii:32

Acting Director: H. CLAY MITCHELL

Managing Editor: E. VAN BUSKIN

Contributing Editor: REV. J. A. FERNANDEZ

Assistants: REV. ANGELO L. LO VALLO, REV. FRANK F. PAYAS, D.D.

REV. ANDREW SOMMESE, S.T.D., REV. FRANCIS GUGLIELMI, D.D.

REV. A. MALINVERNI, D.D.

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# Message OF THE Month

## *A Spiritless Christ*

*"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you . . .? After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 3:1; 4:9)*

**P**ROTESTANTS rightly object to the Roman Catholic crucifix which bears the image of a dead and spiritless Christ. For Christianity is a religion of life and vibrant spiritual strength. Some Catholics, too, object to this "dead" image of Christ on a cross as the central symbol of the Christian religion. The evangelical wing of the Benedictine Order of priests in the Catholic Church has long advocated the removal of this dead image of Christ and its substitution at least by the image of a "triumphant," "resurrected" Christ with arms upheld and radiating life-giving blessings.

The mournful, spiritless effects of Roman Catholic teachings and practices are the result of this false representation of Christ as one whose redemptive work was not complete, and which needs to be patched up by depressing works of penance, self-mortification and church regimentation. All of this in turn is responsible for the slavish subjection of the masses of Roman Catholic people to hierarchical authority, and the absence in them of the free and joyful spirit of completely redeemed Christians.

It is our earnest hope that Catholic people, at least in America, will soon wake to the realization of their right to spiritual joy and freedom as true "sons of God," and throw off the yoke of bondage to men. Their democratic country affords them complete liberty to do so—if they can but rid themselves of the fear of their self-appointed religious dictators. Our efforts are particularly directed to inspire them with sufficient courage to win for themselves this desired liberation.

## Vatican Relaxes Code For Cloistered Nuns

THE MULTI-CENTURY-old code governing the life of cloistered nuns was amended last November 20th, when Pope Pius XII signed an order permitting such nuns, according to N. Y. *Herald Tribune* of December 4, "to help needy persons and to provide better for their own support by going outside their cloisters to work." The report further describes the action as "one of the most basic changes in the history of Roman Catholicism's cloistered convents." Informed sources say that the cloistered nuns will now be permitted to engage in laboratory or typographical work, as well as serving in clinics, hospitals, asylums and sanitariums.

The changes were listed under a new "apostolic constitution" entitled *Sponsa Christi* or Wife of Christ. Although in Protestant America the terms "Sister" and "Nun" are vernacularly used interchangeably, "Ecclesiastically, Sisters are religious women with simple vows, Nuns are religious

women with solemn vows."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic religious women seen in America today are generally "Sisters of the Congregation" who take simple vows, which are renewed at specified times.

This new decree affects only cloistered and enclosed convents of nuns, and sets up a third type of order, now known as "lesser cloister." The other two types are the "active" order in which the nuns do works of charity, and the "contemplative," or "cloistered" order, in which the nuns live austere closed off from the world, giving much time to prayer. This new type of "lesser cloistered" order will combine the main features of the other two types, and the nuns will be classified as leading a mixed religious life. Some of the orders affected are:

### Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

<sup>1</sup>Convent Life, The Meaning of a Religious Vocation, by Martin J. Scott, S.J., published by P. J. Kennedy and Sons, New York, New York, 1919, p. 3.

Among the recitations that cloistered nuns repeat, are the following:

After receiving the black veil, the Sister says "He has placed His Seal on my forehead, that I should admit no other lover but Him."

After receiving the ring on the third finger of her left hand, the Sister says: "I am espoused (wed) to Him Whom the angels serve, and at Whose beauty the sun and moon stand in wonder."

At the close of the service, the newly professed says: "The empire of the world and all the grandeur of this earth I have despised for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed and towards Whom my heart inclineth."

**Passionist Nuns**

**Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual  
Rosary**

**Dominican Nuns of the Second Order  
Magdalenes**

**The Sisters—Servants of the Holy  
Ghost**

**Marie Reparatrice**

**Congregation of Perpetual Adoration**

**Sisters—Adorers of the Precious  
Blood**

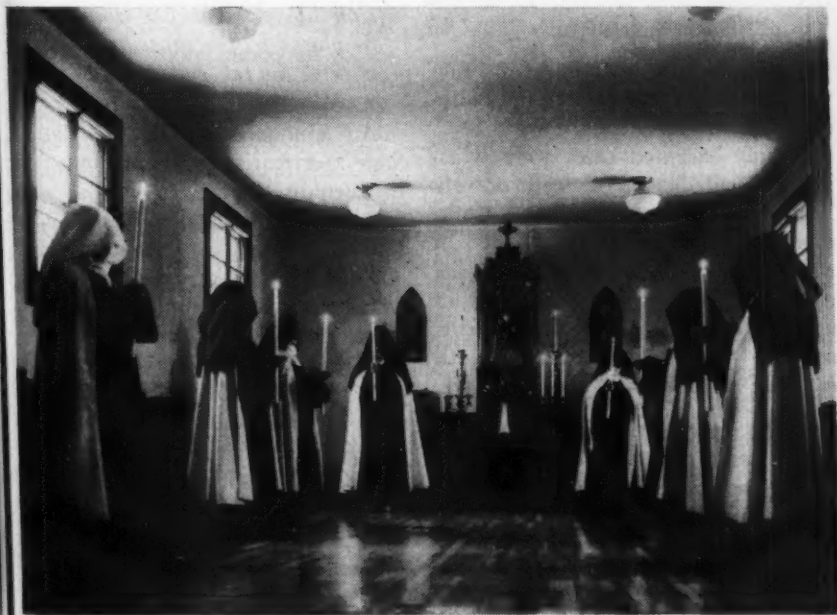
**Visitation Nuns**

The Discalced Carmelite and Poor Clares will retain the old type of cloister. Officially the Roman Catholic Church erected cloistered and enclosed convents in order to allow nuns to devote their lives exclusively to a life of prayer and penance. Ignoring

the Scriptural assurance that Christ's death is sufficient for our salvation, the cloistered nuns, by their ostensibly sacrificial lives, are supposed to ward off God's anger for the sins of the people and carry "on the work begun by Christ on Calvary."<sup>2</sup>

*Sponsa Christi*, as outlined by Pope Pius XII, relaxes the rule prescribed by the will of Pope Pius V in his constitution "*Cerca Pastoralis*" of May 29, 1566, whereby all nuns with solemn vows were compelled to live in enclosure. Only the local Roman Catholic bishop has the right to determine and to change the limits of the en-

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 284.



—Seattle Times, Seattle, Wash.

The above photograph was taken inside a cloistered Carmelite convent, where a photographer explained the mechanism of his camera to a cloistered nun through a thick screen. The nun took this picture and gave the camera back to the photographer who developed the negative and printed the picture. This is the only known photograph of its kind.

closure. Even with the new order, no lay persons of either sex, no matter what their age or to what family they belong, are admitted within the enclosure of nuns without the permission of the Holy See, with the following exceptions:

- 1) *The Local Ordinary, or the regular superior, or another visitor who can enter the enclosure for inspection purposes.*
- 2) *The ordinary or extraordinary confessor of nuns.*
- 3) *The Head of State with his wife and escort; and also cardinals, Doctors, Surgeons, etc. whose help is asked for.*

Under the old regulations, no nun was allowed to leave a "convent without a special indult of the Holy See." The only excepted cases were when in imminent danger of death or very serious evil. Even then, time permitting, the danger must be revealed in writing to the Bishop. Heretofore, according to Canon 2342, n.3, nuns who unlawfully left the enclosures incurred *ipso facto* excommunication with reserved simpliciter to the Holy See.

In the present day, to enter the religious state of life in cloistered or enclosed convents, nuns are obligated to take the three vows embodied in the formula of profession which binds them to their religious community or order. The vows made by nuns are poverty, chastity and obedience:

**"In the name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and under the protection of His Immaculate Mother Mary, ever virgin, I, called in religious Sister (N), do vow and promise to God, Poverty,**

**Chastity, and Obedience, and the service of the Poor, Sick and Ignorant, and to preserve until death in this Congregation, according to the approved rules and constitutions."**

It is well to remark here that since convents of women with solemn vows are not self-supporting, the postulant applies with the dowry determined by the Constitution of the order which she is joining. The dowry must be given to the Religious order before the nun receives the habit, and cannot be remitted either in part or in whole without an Apostolic Indult.

*"The dowry is acquired irrevocably by the monastery or religious congregation by the death of the religious . . . After the first profession of religious her dowry is to be placed by the superioress . . . in a safe, lawful and fruitful investment."*<sup>3</sup>

An announcement by the Vatican State Secretariat declared that this broadening of the traditional rules was designed to "make access to apostolic life easier to cloistered nuns," and the constitution cited a "need to adapt the ancient contemplative life to the new requirements of the times" and set limits for modifications in present rules "to obtain better and more efficient results."

It is safe to interpret, although Roman Catholic sources did not admit it, that this new ruling was brought forth by other obvious causes. Many of these convents are located in Communist-controlled countries. In these countries the property holdings and the monetary investments of the various cloisters have undoubtedly been

<sup>3</sup>The New Canon Law by Stanislaus Woywod, O.F.M., published by Joseph F. Wagner, New York, 1918, p. 105.

confiscated by the State, leaving the individual convent without any means of support. Even in Communist-dominated countries where agreements have been signed by the State and the hierarchy providing for the support of priests and of sisters engaged in social work, no provision was made for cloistered nuns.

As we have mentioned before, Roman Catholic controlled lands are prepared prey for Communist ideology. It is but a short step from black or clerical totalitarianism to red or communist totalitarianism, and it has been almost exclusively the Roman Catholic countries which have been so easily converted to Communistic ones. It is interesting to note, that the Pope evidently feels it more important to retain the financial "incentive" plan whereby each convent must be self-supporting rather than retain the contemplative life of sacrifice and prayer, which the Roman Catholic Church teaches "aids the priests of God and the missionaries and the rulers of the Church."<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, Roman Catholic publications have been stressing the shortage of young people seeking religious vocations. They constantly mention the shortage of Roman Catholic sisters in the teaching vocations, and give that as one reason for fewer parochial schools. By this new decree, nuns formerly completely cloistered will be able to do works of charity and thus relieve existing shortages, and also be happier living more attractive lives.

This becomes a greater drawing card to entice young Roman Catholic girls to becoming nuns, who shied away from the medieval practices.

The cloistered convents, which until now have been virtually autonomous, reports the N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, "will be allowed under the new order to form federations for mutual economic assistance and for the joint training of new applicants." This will permit for less personality clashes with the smaller groups and provide greater companionship for the nuns.

It is easy to see why the Pope believes this new decree to be a wise solution to a serious problem, and why he devoted a large portion of his 5,000 word Latin statement to explain it. But to us, it is also easy to see the uselessness of such a life. The Bible says "*It is not what goeth into a man that defileth him, but what cometh out.*" The Roman Catholic Church cannot hope that by setting a group of people apart with rigid regulations they will make saints out of them. They take with them their own human nature with its lusts and frailties. Sitting in the middle of Times Square, New York City, on New Year's Eve a woman can be closer to Christ and her prayer more effective than one smothered with solitary confinement and all the human attractions withheld from her. "*Where your heart is, there will your treasure be also,*" the Bible declares.

Would you like this article to be read by some of your friends? We will mail sample copies of this issue of our magazine for you at the rate of 6 copies for \$1.00.

<sup>4</sup>Convent Life, The Meaning of a Religious Vocation, by Martin J. Scott, S.J., published by P. J. Kennedy & Sons, New York, New York, 1919, p. 277.



## Vatican Bars Rotary To Its Clergy

**A** DECREE issued last December 20 by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office of which Pope Pius XII is the head, and made public in *L'Osservatore Romano* forbids the Roman Catholic clergymen to join Rotary clubs or attend their closed meetings. It further implied that it might be better for Roman Catholic laymen to refrain from joining such clubs. According to Roman Catholic sources, this decree was based on Canon 684, which states:

"The faithful are worthy of praise if they give their name to associations promoted by the Church, or at least recommended by it; let them beware, however, of associations that are secret, condemned, seditious or suspect or that attempt to escape from the legitimate vigilance of the Church."

The "suspect" referred to in this Canon was further explained in a recent NC dispatch from Vatican City, as quoted in the *Catholic News* of last February 3: "In this case the directive given by the Holy Office appears justified in its general outline by the lay and qua-religious (non-religious) spirit which characterizes Rotary, also with regard to problems on which the Catholic cannot leave aside the teachings of the Church, such as, for example, in the moral field and in the matter of social justice."

This decree stirred much protest from Roman Catholic, as well as Rotary circles. Ironically, the present International President, Arthur La Geurx, is a practicing Roman Catholic.

Percy Hodgson, past president of the Rotary International, visited the Pope last summer, and said: "I found nothing that would indicate to me anything but harmony between Rotary International and the program as carried out by the Church." Rotary International claims "each rotarian is expected to be a loyal member of the church or religious community to which he belongs and personally exemplify by his every act the tenets of his religion."

Rev. John Fullerton, director of Toronto's Council of Catholic Charities, said he would remain a member of the Rotary until officially informed of the decree. Rev. Thomas F. Nunn, pastor of St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church, Memphis, Tenn., declared: "I don't see anything in Rotary detrimental to the Church." Prominent Roman Catholic Bishop John Noll of Ft. Wayne, Ind., a charter member of the Huntington, Ind., Rotary Club, said he thought the trouble was in Latin countries and believed the Vatican would withdraw its ban once the matter had been explained.

But the ban has not been withdrawn. On the contrary, a further clarification has been issued in an "authorized article" in *L'Osservatore Romano*. This clarification reminds the clergy of Canon 18 which states:

"Ecclesiastical laws are to be understood, according to actual meaning of the words considered in their text and context; if the words should be doubtful or obscure, we should refer to par-

allel passages of canon law—if there are any, to the purpose and circumstances of the laws, and finally to the intention of the legislators;"

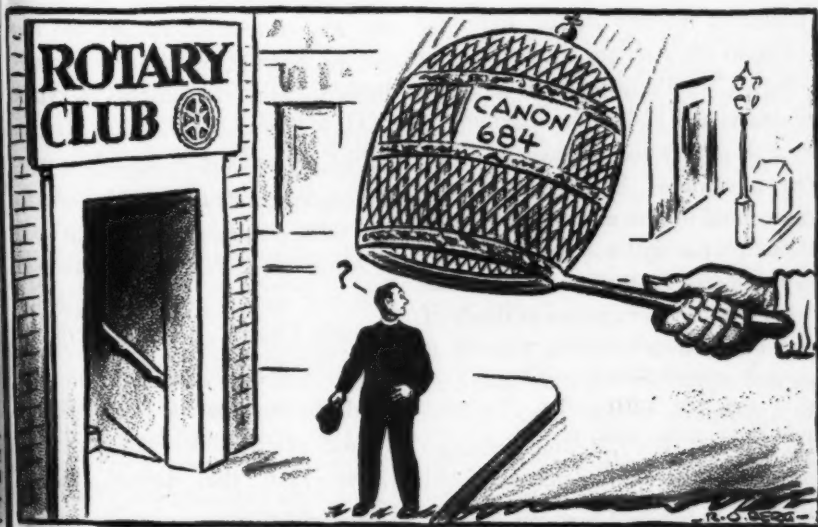
and also refers to a ruling made February 4, 1929 by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation in answer to the question, "Whether Ordinaries could permit ecclesiastics to join the Rotary Club or attend its meetings," which declared that it was not expedient (*non expedire*)! This new decree makes it clear that it is now a matter which is not licit.

Rev. Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., famed moral theologian of the '20's, stated that the "Rotary as a society which admits members of all religions and cannot permit discussion of religion, by its very neutrality favors indifference."

As far back as 1928 and 1929 official Roman Catholic sources discouraged participation in Rotary acti-

vities, and from that time leading Roman Catholic periodicals have remained adamant in their stand against Rotary, mainly on the ground that it was a masonic inspired and infiltrated organization. *Civiltà Cattolica*, recognized Jesuit organ of Rome, in 1928 defined the Rotary as follows:

*"It (the Rotary) . . . appears as if infected with a sin of origin. For . . . the lawyer Harris, founder of the Rotary was a Mason; the first members were masons; the first meeting places were masonic meeting places; the supreme directors of the International Rotary are stooges behind whom dominates masonry, and who are infiltrated with the masonic spirit. No one has been able to quash efficaciously these accusations; on the other hand, it is known that at least a few of the presiding generals and the principal directors are masons."*



Roman Catholic sources contend that the Rotary differs in various countries. In some places, they claim the Rotary to have a "distinctly anti-Catholic tinge and pronounced Masonic connections." In the Fascist heyday Rotary clubs were banned in their controlled countries because of Masonic infiltration. But from official Rotary sources we find that as of December 1, 1950 out of the 7,189 clubs located in 83 countries, with a membership of 343,000, 4,165 clubs are located in the United States, 865 in Latin America, 690 in Continental Europe, Northern Africa and Eastern Mediterranean, 265 in Australia and New Zealand, 258 in Canada, 219 in Asia and 42 in other parts of the world.

Conclusively this proves that the overwhelming majority of clubs are in the United States; but all Roman Catholic priests must strictly adhere to the decision of the new decree, according to Canon 18. And for the bewildered Roman Catholic layman? It is up to his individual bishop to determine if his club is masonic inspired or otherwise condemned. If a Rotary club is condemned in one diocese and not in another, what will happen to the Roman Catholic vaunted unity of morality? It will become another example of how the Roman Catholic Church is not and never has been consistent in the application of her moral principles and law. For the same situation, one is excused from damnation and the other is consigned to the fires of

Hell. Again the diocesan border makes all the difference.

If a Roman Catholic priest or layman continues membership in a condemned society he incurs immediate excommunication from the Church and is no longer entitled to its benefits: he can no longer obtain forgiveness of sin in the auricular confession, act as a sponsor at Baptism, confirmation or marriage; he can not be married either privately or publicly in the Roman Catholic Church; he can not receive the customary sacraments; his business will be boycotted by other Roman Catholics; he can not have dealings with other Roman Catholics in civil or social affairs lest they fall under the same curse; and should he die, no funeral services will be held for him and no burial in a consecrated plot.

According to Canon law, other condemned societies include: the Masons, the Anarchist, Carbonarian, the Fenian, the Nihilist, Socialist, Communist, Bible Societies, the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, the Eastern Star, the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.

Forgiveness from excommunication may come only from the Pope in Rome. It is this dread fear of excommunication that makes possible the Roman Catholic Church's bending of the will of its communicants to itself.

All this because the Rotary believes in and practices Service above Self, rather than the Roman Catholic Church above all.



## Extreme Unction

PUBLICITY HAS done much to increase the popularity of the Roman Catholic Church among Protestants. Whenever the newspaper reports a tragedy, an enterprising photographer seems to be near to snap a picture of a priest in action administering the "last rites." Because of this "now-common-sight," Protestants have lost their revulsion at the pictures, and some even admit a possible physiological benefit.

In reality this is only another instance of the deception of man-made religions, which from the dawn of history, have made salvation depend upon the touch of a priest or a medicine man.

Roman Catholic theology has decreed that Extreme Unction—the rubbing of oil by a priest on the body of a dying or recently deceased person, accompanied by a prayer formula—is a sacrament instituted by Christ himself, whereby the person's sins are forgiven and he is safely set on the road to purgatory. It is also claimed that sick people may even be cured of their bodily ills by the touch of this oil. This Roman Catholic "sacrament" is based solely on a reference in the Epistle of St. James (5:13), who recommended the calling in of the elders of the church to pray for and anoint "the sick among you."

Every Catholic priest habitually carries with him a small silver container with cotton wool soaked in olive oil specially blessed by a bishop on Holy Thursday each year. Moistening his thumb with this oil, the priest makes the sign of the cross with it on the

forehead, feet, ears, mouth and other parts of the body of the dying person. The benefit is believed to take place also if the person is unconscious of the operation, and even for some time after he has been pronounced dead by a physician.

A rule of the church, however, restricts this rite exclusively to persons "in danger of death *by sickness*." Thus a man condemned to die in the electric chair cannot receive this "sacrament" until after he is dead by the electric current, since before the sheriff pulls the switch the victim is not in danger of death "by sickness." After the attending physicians have applied their stethoscopes and pronounced the man legally dead, then the priest may give him the Extreme Unction.

Apart from what Jesus Christ really taught about the forgiveness of sins, God would indeed be a most unfair God were he to entrust a man's future in hell or heaven for all eternity to the chance presence of a priest at his deathbed. What if the priest were otherwise engaged, sick, out of town, or too lazy to answer the call? And what about the poor farmer who cannot afford a telephone to call a priest in an emergency, or a car to fetch him in time as the rich can?

The same Saint James tells us (1:16-17): "*Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*"

**I**N ALL MATTERS OF doctrine, ritual and organization, the structure of the Roman Catholic Church is geared to the preservation and further expansion of its power over all institutions of life. This is in keeping with its Roman imperial design of being the sole, universal and dictatorial Church in Christendom.

To many, even outside the Roman Church's membership, this grandiose design of a monolithic, undisputed "Church-ocracy" has its attractions. In a booklet for Protestants, by Richard Ginder and published by *The Catholic Information Society*, with the significant title "COME ON IN!" the author offers the following as one of the greatest inducements: "If you become a Catholic, you will associate yourself with the largest, most ancient, most powerful religious organization in the world."

#### ANATOMICAL STRUCTURE

The structure of this great papal "corporation" of world power is cleverly 'anatomical' in its every function. It has its authoritarian directing head (the Pope) and automatically responsive members. Of the utmost importance are its indispensable veins—the seven sacraments—which act as channels through which the life-stream of "grace" can alone flow into the souls of men. The wafer of holy communion recently has been made the necessary sustaining food, as well as the remedial and preventive medicine for all its members. The confessional is its exhaust—the excretory organ for the release of accumulated waste and injurious matter (sins)—the purifying process of the body corporate. The intricate network of cen-

**All grace must flow only through these channels of the Church**

## The Power Behind

By L. H. LEHMANN

turies of theological and philosophical casuistry is its protective skin, shielding it against outside inimical and heretical forces.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See chapter 19 of book *Out of the Labyrinth* by Dr. Lehmann for a complete exposition of the "anatomical" structure of the Catholic Church.



## Why Seven Sacraments

fact that by reducing the number to the original two Scriptural sacraments, the Church structure that resulted from the Protestant Reformation at once was deprived of worldly power, whereas the Roman Church, by holding on to and reaffirming the need for seven sacraments, has retained its structure of world power.

The Council of Trent, summoned to beat back the growing threat of the Protestant Reformation in 1543, made sure to decree the following irrevocable dogma:

"If anyone says that the Sacraments of the New Law were not instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that there are more or less than seven, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order and Matrimony . . . Let him be Anathema!"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Sess. vii, can. 1, March 3, 1547.

### WHY SEVEN SACRAMENTS?

Many wonder why the Roman Church insists on seven sacraments and Protestants only two—especially since Evangelical Protestantism represents the reformed, purified Evangelical teaching of Christianity. The answer may immediately be seen in the

It can easily be proved how untrue, scripturally and historically, this dogmatic assertion is, as will be shown later. Yet, the Roman Catholic Church, in order to insist dogmatically and irrevocably that there are seven sacraments, goes so far as to condemn to everlasting punishment in hell all those who deny it. There must therefore be a very potent 'why' behind it all—why the Church of Rome insists on seven and why the Evangelical Protestant churches insist on only two.

In the first place, it will be noticed that the two sacraments to which Protestants adhere—Baptism and Eucharist—have *Greek* names, and that the other five have *Latin* names. This in itself is proof that these latter had no part in the structure of the early Christian Church, the language of which was not Latin, but Greek. The word 'sacrament' itself is not a Biblical word, nor does it appear in the New Testament at all except for an admittedly false translation in the Roman Catholic version of the Greek word '*Mysterion*' (Mystery) in *Eph.* 5:32. If the Roman pagan word 'sacrament' were synonymous with the New Testament word 'mystery,' then the number of sacraments would far exceed that of seven. Paul speaks of the *mystery of the Gospel* (*Eph.* 6: 19) and of the *mystery of Faith* (*1 Tim.* 3:9).

#### LUTHER'S ONE SACRAMENT

Luther held that there was really only one sacrament in the true meaning of the word 'mystery,' and that is the "Sacrament of the Word." Boehmer, in his interesting and scholarly work on Luther, *Road to Reforma-*

*tion*,<sup>3</sup> paraphrases Luther on this as follows:

"Properly speaking, Luther began, the Bible recognizes only one sacrament, the word of God, and three sacramental signs, Baptism, penance and the Lord's Supper. Consequently only these three can with right and authority be designated as sacraments. But they all have been twisted, corrupted and distorted. The Lord's Supper has been distorted by the Antichrist, in the first place, by withholding the cup from the laity and, in the second place, by demanding that everyone, on pain of death by burning, must believe the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, instead of allowing everyone to form his own opinion of the presence, affirmed by the Scriptures, of Christ's body and blood in the elements of the Lord's Supper. *The worst distortion of the Holy Supper, however, is the transformation of God's gift into a gift which men make to God, into a sacrifice.*"

"The Antichrist," Luther further held, "could do less harm to Baptism." Nevertheless, Boehmer paraphrases Luther as saying, "he succeeded in making the faithful forget entirely on what this sacrament actually depends—the Word of promise which is spoken during the administration of Baptism, 'Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' For Baptism in itself profits nothing and is of no effect, wrote Luther, apart from the faith which trusts this Word."

<sup>3</sup>Recently and ably translated into English and made available in America under this title; The Muhlenberg Press, Price \$4.00.

Luther also held that, as far as 'penance' is concerned, "this sacrament has been destroyed and something altogether different has been put in its place."

In other words, what the Reformation really did was to abolish *all* the sacraments as theretofore practiced in the Catholic Church, and restored the Word of God in their place as the one and only real sacrament or 'mystery' that is effective in the Christian order. It did away with the distortion of the Lord's Supper as a "sacrifice,"



Acme Photo

## SECRET CONFESSION



Acme Photo

*"Ego te absolvo"*

and with Baptism as essentially depending upon the pouring of water accompanied by a magical Latin formula. "Penance," too, was restored to its rightful place in Christian soteriology as "repentance" (*metanoia*), an inner change of heart, a "new birth," by which the sinner is born again into his new status as a saint.

Confirmation, marriage, ordination, and extreme unction, Luther wrote, are not sacraments, are unknown to the Bible and must, on this account alone, be "roundly rejected."

But by roundly rejecting the Roman Church's system of seven sacraments, the Protestant reformers dealt a destructive blow at the whole structure of Catholic Church power—in political affairs. Without its sacramental system even today the Roman Catholic Church would lose both its religious and secular power—the latter because of its lack of the former.

The Lord's Supper ". . . twisted, corrupted and distorted . . . by the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation . . ."

Luther

March, 1951

## POWER FROM WEAKNESS

All power enters at the door of weakness—and there is nothing weaker and more helpless than the nature of man at certain periods of his life. These chiefly are: at birth, at puberty, when he falls in love and must get married, when he yields to sins of the flesh, when he seeks to rule others, and when he comes to die.

The Roman Catholic Church has a sacrament for each of these periods of man's weakness and helplessness. And it is at those times that a priest must be summoned, who alone can supply what is believed to make up for the poor victim's helpless condition. From the cradle to the grave—from womb to tomb and even beyond the grave—the life of man is placed in the hands of the priest. What is more powerless and helpless than a new-born babe? But in every Catholic family, as soon as a baby appears, the priest becomes an absolute necessity — for without Baptism the child will never enter heaven. Again, when that child grows up and succumbs to the human weakness of love of the opposite sex, marriage becomes a necessity. Again the presence of the priest is essential. Only by risking not only "a life of sin," but "living in sin," and being damned forever in hell, can a Roman Catholic dare to get married without the permission and authority of his priests. When he is weak from the shame and remorse of sins committed, again his only recourse is to a priest in the secrecy of the confessional. If he wants the high office of a priest for himself, he must again submit to the administration of a sacrament. But it is when he is weakest of all—when he comes to die—that he needs the priest most



A Roman priest offering the 'Sacrifice of the Mass' at a wedding ceremony. Luther describes this corruption of the Lord's Supper as "the transformation of God's gift into a gift which men make to God, into a sacrifice."

of all. And even if he gets the pardon and anointing of a priest before he dies, he still must depend upon the priest after he is dead to continue to offer the "sacrifice of the mass"—that worst of all distortions of a sacrament that Luther deplored — for almost endless ages for the redemption of his soul from Purgatory, and for which money payments must be made.

If the Roman Catholic Church could not sustain its power over men and women at these stated times of their great weaknesses, then it could not sway them in matters of politics, education, press, labor unions, voting at elections, and other things that go to make up control of national and international affairs.



## THEOLOGICAL DISHONESTY

It should not be surprising therefore that the defenders of Catholic Church power should use every argument, fair or foul, to insist upon the retention of their corrupt sacramental system that Luther and the other Protestant reformers swept away. Their dishonesty may be seen in any of their recognized textbooks on the subject. Best of all, because convenient and readily available to both Catholics and Protestants, is Father Conway's *Question Box*. This book is in the possession of millions of people; it contains the arguments of all the best Catholic theologians; and pretends to refute all questions submitted by Protestants.<sup>4</sup>

In defense of the seven sacraments, Father Conway makes the weak statement: "*The New Testament mentions all the Sacraments more or less explicitly.*" But why should he even try to prove from the New Testament there must be seven sacraments, since he has already laid it down as an axiom (p. 76) that, "*the Bible is not the only source of faith*"? The Bible, New or Old Testament, does not even use his pagan word 'sacrament,' although he places great emphasis on the name, which is not important, anyway. Christ instituted Baptism and the Lord's Supper without a label or classification. But theologians love to indulge in classifications and definitions.

<sup>4</sup>An example of the inconsistencies and contradictions that abound in this well-known work of Father Conway may be seen on page 278. Answering the question why Catholics object to Prohibition, he ridicules "compulsory self-denial," and states that "*enforced virtue is no virtue at all.*" But on page 440, where he is asked why Catholics must abstain from meat on Fridays, why they must go to mass on Sunday, why priests must be celibate, etc., he completely forgets his "compulsory self-denial" argument.

Their ecclesiastical government then seizes upon these classifications and, employing its dictatorial power, denounces, curses, excommunicates and drags to the stake anyone who honestly believes otherwise. The numeratorial decree of the Council of Trent is an example of this. *If you don't believe in the number seven, no more, no less, you are cursed to hell for all eternity.*

The denominator sacrament is an ancient pagan word, older than Christianity. In Roman pagan theology it denoted anything related to the pagan temples and their gods, and involved the taking of a secret oath. The disciplinary rite of "Penance" was a Roman pagan sacrament. Because it was 'secret,' it was regarded as 'sacred,' but not necessarily 'holy' in our Christian use of the word. The baptismal and matrimonial vows of the early Christians in Rome came to be called *sacramenta* ("secrets of the mind"), just as the Roman military oath was also called a *sacramentum*. St. Augustine (fifth century) calls the 'Lord's Prayer' a sacrament (*Serm.* 228:3).

Such is the origin of a word which was later developed into a system to dominate the lives of all Christians, and which was forced upon them by murder, torture and deprivation, until Martin Luther and the other priest-reformers rebelled and abolished it. With such a system true liberty can never survive. "*History, I believe,*" Thomas Jefferson declared, "*furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government.*" And as long as the curses of the Council of Trent, heaped upon Protestants, are not retracted, a country ruled by

Roman Catholic Church power cannot ever be free.

#### EARLY FATHERS

Father Conway tries to enlist the "Fathers of the Church" to prove there must be seven sacraments. *"The early Fathers mentioned, indeed, all of the seven sacraments, but they never drew up a complete list of them,"* he declares. But how does this prove there were seven, no more, no less? He continues:

"We however find the Apostolic Fathers, like St. Justin (d. 165) mentioning frequently Baptism and the Eucharist . . . Tertullian a hundred years later speaks also of Confirmation and Penance . . . St. Augustine (d. 430) Orders . . . (and)

the sanctity of Marriage . . . Extreme Unction is described by his contemporary, Pope Innocent I . . . *By the fifth century, therefore, we meet with all the seven Sacraments."*

Thus, by selecting a few Fathers over a period of five hundred years who "mention" the seven sacraments, he wants to prove they are necessary. Omitting all the Fathers who wrote to the contrary, this great Catholic apologist upholds the anathemas of the Council of Trent against anyone who would dare deny there are more or less than seven.

All the Apostolic Fathers, the successors of the Apostles, it is true, mention the two Protestant sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper (but



Receiving 'Sacrament' of Ordination

Acme Photo



never made a magical rite or a "sacrifice" out of them)—and these two only. How could the 'mention' of Extreme Unction by a Pope of the fifth century be proof of seven?

Father Conway then jumps out of the fifth century into the twelfth, and quotes a list of sacraments by Otto of Bamberg, Bishop Gregory of Bergamo (1133-1146), as the final proof of his seven sacraments. It is true that this Bishop Gregory of Bergamo mentions such a list, but Father Conway does not let Protestants know what this 'Protestant' Bishop of the twelfth century said when "mentioning" them. Here is what he says:

"Three sacraments we have in the Church which not without reason are thought more worthy than the other sacraments, namely, Baptism, Chrism, the Body and Blood of the Lord; of which three the first and the last we have received by the institution of the Redeemer Himself, while the one which we have placed in the middle, is but of apostolic tradition. Besides these, there are certain others which seem like older sacraments, namely, priestly ordination and lawful marriage. Furthermore, we speak sometimes of the Sacrament of the Scriptures and of the Sacrament of the Oath."

#### SACRAMENTAL CONTROL IN POLITICS

The far-reaching effects of the restoration of the proper use of sacramental rites by the Protestant Reformation became evident in the democratic constitution of modern states. It loosened the grip of ecclesiastical power over the souls of men, and therefore over their political and social condition. Democratic constitutions themselves become a farce, as in South American countries, as long as the dominant Church power holds con-

trol by fear over the souls of a majority of the people from the cradle to the grave. If men and women, from the womb to the tomb and beyond, depend for what they believe most essential to their existence on the power of a priest, then the authority of the Church can at any time nullify in a constitution whatever does not suit its ends.

It has taken us a long time to realize that freedom and salvation are synonymous, and that, as Thomas Jefferson warned, no priest-ridden people can ever be really free.



Acme Photo

#### AT DEATH

A priest administering the 'Last Rites' of 'Extreme Unction' to a dying man.

*From Bishop Gregory of Bergamo, Tract. de Ver. Copr. Xsti, c. 14.*

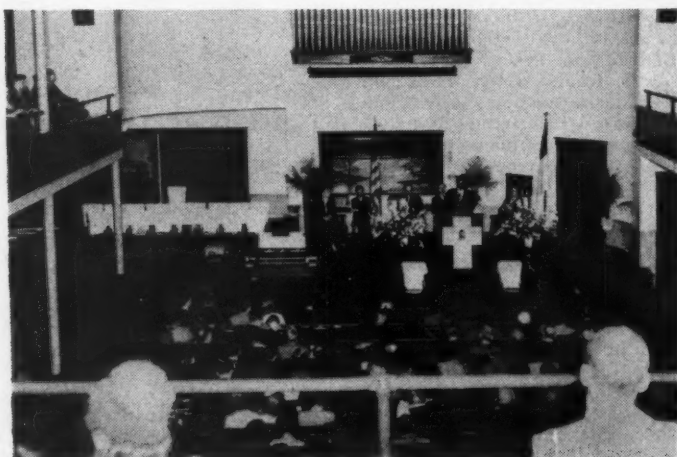
March, 1951

# Christ's Mission Conducts a Christian Information Rally

**C**HRIST'S MISSION conducted a seven-day Christian information rally in Covington, Ky., last January 21 through 28, with four converted Roman Catholic priests and one former Roman Catholic monk participating. There were forty-eight various services in all, and the many thousands of people attending included Roman Catholic students for the priesthood, priests, and laymen. The two Sunday afternoon mass rallies and

the daily evening services were conducted in the host church, Latona Christian Church, in Covington. Afternoon services were held in several of the more than fifty cooperating churches of the greater Cincinnati area.

There were several highlights of the conference. At the first mass meeting on Sunday afternoon, January 21, Dr. Walter M. Montañó and Jaime Cifuentes, both former monks from Latona



**WEDNESDAY EVENING'S MASS RALLY WHEN DR. MONTAÑO SPOKE ON "THE BETRAYAL OF CHRIST"**

Left to right on the platform, Harvey Bream, song leader; Jaime Cifuentes, former monk; Angelo Lo Vallo, former priest; H. Clay Mitchell, Acting Director of Christ's Mission and Joseph Hill, pastor of the host church. Former priest, William E. Burke, absent from this picture, was addressing a Masonic meeting.



Rev. H. Clay Mitchell, Acting Director of Christ's Mission, officially greeting the friends in Covington for the Mission.

America, recounted the story of their individual conversions. It was a most unusual service, Dr. Montañó explaining his escape from a Roman Catholic monastery twenty-four years ago, and Jaime Cifuentes giving a modern counterpart with his escape last July 15.

Tuesday evening, Rev. Andrew Sommers of Philadelphia, was welcomed to the speaker's rostrum, and although no photographer was available to record it, an enthusiastic congregation

enjoyed his message, "True or False Church—Which?"

Wednesday, the mid-way peak of the conference marked the occasion of the visit of our Acting Director, Rev. H. Clay Mitchell. The same day Mr. Burke spoke to an overflowing closed meeting of the local Masonic order.

A youth banquet, addressed by Mr. LoVallo on the subject of "Mixed



Dr. Walter M. Montañó, author of "Behind the Purple Curtain" and converted former Dominican priest, flew from California to take part in the conference. Dr. Montañó is described as the "Martin Luther of South America."



**Field Representative, William E. Burke, discussing the service with Song Leader, Harvey Bream, and Pastor Joseph Hill.**



"Marriage," was a feature of Thursday while the entire conference closed with two inspiring rallies on Sunday, January 28.

After each service the various speakers were available for further discussion and consultation and several Roman Catholics expressed a desire to know more of the peace and satisfaction which the former priests have found in the Gospel of Christ.



**Former Priest, Angelo L. Lo Vallo, addressing a Youth Banquet on the subject of "Mixed Marriages."**

## Gambling Investigated

FORMER MAYOR of New York City, Roman Catholic William

O'Dwyer made the startling demand last year that gambling on sporting events be legalized by the Legislature and supervised by a state agency. The proposal, which was flown to Governor Dewey in Albany in a Police Department plane, was that gambling on sporting events in general be made legal because of the difficulty of coping with the gambling problem.

A wide spread shakeup of police inspectors and plain clothes detectives has recently taken place in New York City where one of the biggest "Bookie Businesses" is being cracked. The investigation started shortly before O'Dwyer resigned to take the post of Ambassador to Mexico.

When the former mayor introduced his proposal, Protestant churches immediately protested the plan while the Roman Catholic Church—which does not regard gambling in itself as sinful—remained silent.

The Federal Council of Churches declared that it considered gambling "an insidious menace to personal character and to morality." Speaking for the Protestant Council of the City of New York, Rev. Dr. Robert W. Searle was reported in the *N. Y. Times* as stating that it was "naive" of the Mayor to suggest that legalization of gambling would "eliminate its criminal elements." One hundred Protestant clergymen met in Brooklyn and voted "complete and unrelenting opposition" to the O'Dwyer plan. The Pastoral Conference of the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod opposed the proposal and resolved that:

"We cannot sacrifice our God-given principles simply because in a purely monetary way such legislation might benefit New York State."

There is little chance that Mayor O'Dwyer's plan would ever become law, since not only are the clergy and people of

right-minded opinion against it, but also the bookmakers and their powerful syndicates, who would be deprived of huge profits. The Mayor's plan was limited to 'bookmaking' on sporting events, and excluded slot machines and dice games, policy, etc., but suggested that State lotteries should also be considered by the Legislature.

In the meantime it seems to be most difficult to stop or control gambling or the 'Bookie Business'—by far the largest business in the United States. It is estimated that this secret but well-known business of gambling handled at least \$15 billion in the year 1949. This exceeds by far the income of the largest industries of the country. According to a feature article in the *N. Y. Times* of recent date, this figure of \$15 billion is estimated as follows: the 24,000,000 persons who attended race tracks, where pari-mutuel betting is allowed (in 24 states), wagered about one-and-a-half billion dollars. But it is known that for every dollar bet on a race track, the illegal bookies get \$3. This would bring the total for horse betting to \$6 billion. Another \$3 billion is made up of gambling on basketball, football, hockey and boxing.

New York's Protestant Governor Thomas E. Dewey strongly denounced Mayor O'Dwyer's plan to legalize gambling in the State, calling it "immoral, shocking and indecent." He said that the only results that could be had from its approval would be poverty, crime, corruption, demoralization of ethical and moral standards, lower living standards and misery. The arguments against the legalization of gambling cannot be better put perhaps than in the following summary of Governor Dewey's 9-point answer to Mayor O'Dwyer's plan, as quoted from the *N. Y. Times*:

1. It is fundamentally immoral to encourage people to look to gambling profits as a source of family income.

March, 1951

2. It is indecent for government to finance itself so largely out of people's weaknesses that it encourages it.

3. It is impossible to draw any line between types of gambling that should be permitted and barred.

4. Gambling would constitute a continuous invitation for husbands and wives to gamble away money needed for family support.

5. Gambling would demoralize the conduct of sports events.

6. Most nations that have encouraged gambling are in a bad financial condition and their people poverty-stricken.

7. When gambling was legal in the early days in most sections of this country, corruption and poverty flourished so that people revolted against it. New York was the first to ban gambling and should be the last to legalize it.

8. Organized gambling has resulted in powerful underworld figures, gang wars, murder, corruption and poverty in some states.

9. Illegal gambling cannot exist where there is proper leadership and honorable administration of criminal justice.

In Roman Catholic teaching gambling and drinking are not sins in themselves, but only the excess participation in them. No one is yet able to say conclusively and arbitrarily what constitutes excess. It is such varying distinctions that necessitate the close contact between the Roman Catholic Church and its parishoner, who must confess his exploits to a priest in order to find out if he has sinned or not.

### *Another Voice Speaks Out*

FROM ONE of the best known pulpits in the United States, New York's Riverside Church, came a hard hitting sermon which rejected the new Roman Catholic dogma of the Assumption as standing "without a shred of Biblical evidence to support it." Scottish-born Dr. Robert J. McCracken, pastor, also attacked the idolatry displayed by the Roman Catholic Church at the Marian Congress in Ottawa in June 1947 when it was reported that the plaster image of Mary was kissed on the foot so often that the paint was worn off, and declared: *"This is the sort of thing that provides ammunition for Communists who attack religion as an outmoded superstition."*

Charles A. Hart of the Catholic University of America attacked Dr. McCracken in a letter appearing in the *Washington Post* and suggested that he apologize for a "false insinuation" he had made in an address at the National Preaching Mission held in Washington, D. C., last October 29. Dr. McCracken's theme was "Protestantism's Task in America," and he declared: "We shall have to protest against the corruption of the gospel which is inevitable with an autocratic institution greedy of power and pelf."

## COMING NEXT MONTH —

Be sure to read the April, 1951, issue of THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE. It will contain a stirring challenge to every Protestant as well as an important announcement.

WHAT ABOUT PETER'S BONES? Were they found in Rome? What effect does the recent Vatican announcement regarding them have on Protestantism?

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Speech  
Reaffirmed  
A Victor**

even though in criticism of another religion. It struck down on a New York City ordinance requiring police permits for preachers to conduct religious services in the street.

This 8-to-1 decision reversed the conviction of the Rev. Carl Jacob Kunz, a Baptist minister of New York, who was arrested and fined \$10.00 for holding a street service without a permit. Mr. Kunz' permit had been revoked in 1946 and the police had refused to issue him another after a hearing by the Police Commissioner who said the minister had made scurrilous attacks on Roman Catholics and Jews.

Chief Justice Vinson said that the lower courts which had upheld this conviction "mistakenly" supported their conclusion with evidence that Mr. Kunz' meetings "caused some disorder." He further declared that "New York could not vest restraining control over the right to speak on religious subjects in an administrative official where there were 'no appropriate standards' to guide his actions," reported the N. Y. *Times* of last January 16. Justice Robert H. Jackson dissented.

In another case bearing on freedom of expression and thought similar to New York, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the City Council of Havre de Grace, Md., had wrongfully denied use of a city park for a religious service of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In the decision written by Chief Justice Vinson, it was stated the court condemned "statutes and ordinances requiring permits from local officials on the ground that 'a license requirement constituted a prior restraint on freedom of speech, press and religion, and in the absence of narrowly drawn, reasonable and definite standards for the officials to follow, must be invalid.'"

These decisions are a great step back to our cherished principles of freedom of speech, press and religion. It had been maneuvered in many large cities throughout the country that a person wishing to hold a public street meeting expressing his private views had to procure a permit from the local police authorities. These local authorities were the sole judge of the worthiness of such a petition and could revoke or refuse permission at will. In New York City, at least, many of these authorities were Roman Catholics, who could easily and legally prevent any public denunciation of their faith.

Now, however, with this recent reaffirmation of the right of free speech, Protestants may again declare from the house tops and the street corners the true Gospel of Christ.

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## Calvin's Logic Against The Mass

CALVIN'S deadly logic demolishing the false Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in the sacrifice of the Mass, may be seen from the following quotation:

"Papists hold forth to us their system of transubstantiation: they allege that, when the act of consecration has been gone through, the substance of the bread no longer exists, and that nothing remains but the 'accidents' (color, taste, smell, shape). To this contrivance we oppose—not merely the plain words of Scripture—but the very nature of the sacrament. For what is the meaning of the *Supper*, if there is no correspondence between

the visible sign and the spiritual reality? They would have the sign to be a false and delusive appearance of bread. What then will the thing signified be, but a mere imagination? Hence, if there must be a correspondence between the sign and its reality, it is necessary that the bread be real—not imaginary—to represent Christ's real body. Besides, Christ's body is here given us not simply, but *as food*. Now it is not by any means the color of the bread that nourishes us, but the substance. *In fine, if we would have reality in the thing itself, there must be no deception in the sign.*"



"SH-H-H, NOT SO LOUD!"





► **A PROTEST** was lodged with the county commissioner of schools in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by the Evangelical Ministerial Union over the violation of law by Roman Catholics in a public school north of Grand Rapids. It was ascertained that the Roman Catholic catechism, along with Roman Catholic prayers and readers were taught during the school hours. After a thorough investigation the school commissioner ordered the practice discontinued. A few years ago, the school commissioner ordered the removal of Roman Catholic images and sacramentals from the same school building.

► **IN A REPORT OF THE** Royal Commission on Education, which took nearly six years to compile, increased religious instruction in Ontario public schools is urged. This report also recommended the limitation of tax aid to Roman Catholic elementary education only. Religious instruction has been part of the public school curriculum since 1944, but since the course must be kept nonsectarian and based solely on Bible text, the Roman Catholics feel it an "emasculated course."

► **EX-PRIEST** Manual Garrido-Aldama, author of *From Roman Priest to Radio Minister*, is now in Buenos Aires, where he is Secretary for Audio-Visual Aids of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America. Dr. Aldama works to supply up-to-date information to evangelical workers in Latin America concerning the availability and use of materials, radio programs, religious films, etc. The Committee on Cooperation in Latin America is a branch of the Presbyterian Church Foreign Mission Department.

► **IN AN UNUSUAL** move, the Pope has named an Irish priest as Papal theologian. This is believed to be the first time in centuries, reports the N.Y. 'Times' of last January 16, that a non-Italian has been so appointed.

► **TO SEAL THE HOLY DOOR** of St. Peter's basilica last Christmas Eve 3,000 bricks were used. Each brick cost about \$1.54 and anyone who purchased one had the right to have his name stamped on it. He was also entitled to reclaim it at the next opening of the Holy Door planned for Christmas Eve, 1974. In sealing the door, Pope Pius wore a mason's apron and laid the first three bricks with a silver trowel. The remainder of the bricks were laid by experienced masons.

► **THE ONLY** hospital in Brownsville, Texas, has denied the use of its facilities to Dr. J. M. Stephens, a 36-year old unchurched physician, who attempted to violate the national code of ethics established for Roman Catholic hospitals. During the course of an operation he attempted to sterilize a patient, at the request of her and her husband and upon his own medical observation. Dr. Stephens declared that he "thought people should know that they and their doctors do not have a free choice when they enter a Roman Catholic hospital."

Commenting on the incident, Dr. J. M. Dawson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs pointed out that this hospital is receiving federal funds for an expansion program, yet rules for operations performed in the hospital are laid down by Roman Catholic hospital officials, without regard to the feelings of the patient. "We Baptists have stood against appropriations of federal funds to any sectarian institutions in the past," he continued, "and will against all such allocations in the future. This Brownsville incident is a perfect example of the conflicts and contradictions which inevitably arise when public monies are put under sectarian control."

► **DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS** have been established between Iran and the Vatican, with the appointment of Fatollah Pakhravan as Iran's first Ambassador to the Vatican.

► **ROMAN CATHOLIC PARENTS** in Massachusetts, have been instructed by their priests to return the Gideon Bibles their children accepted at public school assemblies. About 200 Roman Catholic children in one parish received the Bibles.

► **THE CZECHOSLOVAK** Government has announced that its industry has adopted a calendar of 364 days. There will be no December 31. The traditional Gregorian calendar of 365 days with the usual calendar months will continue in everyday life.

► **RUSSIAN ORTHODOX** Church of North America installed last December 7 Metropolitan Leonty as successor to the late Metropolitan Theophilus. In its All-American Sobor, the church condemned "spiritually" the anti-religious materialistic teachings of communism and sent a message to Gen. Douglas MacArthur bestowing "God's blessings upon you and the glorious United Nations armies fighting in Korea."

► **SPANISH CENSORS** last December forbade the use of the English word "Christmas" in the Spanish press. "Christmas does not mean the Yuletide to Spaniards; it means a Christmas card," explained the N. Y. Times of last December 24. It is the belief of Spanish churchmen that the sending of Christmas cards is primarily a Protestant custom, and that such a greeting was virtually unknown in Spain except among Anglo-Saxon residents, until the last ten years when they have become popular.

► **BRITAIN** announced last January the appointment of Sir John Balfour, formerly Ambassador to Argentina, to the new post of Ambassador to Spain.

► **WITH THE RECENT** death of Cardinal Marchetti-Selvaggiani, dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, the College is now reduced to only 51 members, of which 18 are Italians and 33 non-Italians. It is 19 short of the full complement.

# Results IN JAPAN



"5,100 Japanese raised their hands in response to my invitation to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour."

—H. George Vorshelm, Jr.



"I personally distributed 275,000 Gospels and Testaments to the Japanese people who attended our meetings."

—Phil Saint

"Regularly 10 to 12 percent and several times 40 to 50 percent of all my audiences during two months in Japan responded to the invitation."

—Leymon W. ("Deak") Ketcham



"75,000 to 100,000 Japanese people attended 61 meetings in the two months in which I spoke and distributed Gospels."

—Charles W. Anderson



"Professors, peddlers, police, prisoners, soldiers, students—all classes responded alike to the Gospel message."

—Victor B. Seattle



"About one million people have attended our PTL meetings since the start of our campaign. We have distributed six million Gospels and Testaments."

—Glenn W. Wagner



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# Protestantism In Italy

By A. L. WARNSHUIS



The following factual report of the condition of Protestants in Italy was released by Church World Service, an organization that aids the struggling Protestant churches in Europe, and of which Dr. Warnshuis is the executive director.]

ITALY is strictly speaking a Roman Catholic country, and Protestants are proportionately an insignificant minority. Roman Catholicism is the state religion, but the popular expression of it is dominated by the veneration of the Virgin Mary. The triumphal arches set up everywhere at the time of Easter are dedicated, not to Christ the King, but to Mary, the Queen of Heaven.

The Roman Catholic Church occupies the soul of the Italian people, not by the power of theological convictions, but by the close connection with the freedom of the people. The Roman Catholic Church in the minds of Italians is the natural continuation of Roman Imperialism. The church is the center of Italian culture. Legally Italy is a Roman Catholic land. Marriages are sealed in the church, divorce is impossible. There are no official statistics of the non-church-going people, but the number of "free" marriages is an indication of their increase. In the schools only Roman

Catholic instruction is given, and priests who lay aside their cassock cannot obtain any governmental appointment. A teaching position would be a natural occupation for any priest that became a Protestant, but the road to such an appointment is effectually barricaded.

Political life in Italy since the war has been characterized by the struggle with communism. The communist party is larger than in any other country in western Europe. The backward social conditions give the communists a platform. Laws for social welfare are unknown. In the shadow of St. Peter's great cathedral, the social encyclicals of the pope have had scarcely any practical application. Twenty-one per cent of the Italian people are illiterate; land ownership is still feudalistic; in southern Italy a large proportion of the laborers are unemployed for ten months in the year. In a word, this country languishes for a social revolution such as other lands in western Europe experienced in the times of the Reformation.

The communists count upon a revolution. The Christian-Democrats hope for a gradual development. In between these two great forces there is no strong democratic middle party. In this political situation, the Italian Protestants face a dilemma. Their strongly developed feeling of responsibility for the welfare of their country, advocates as they are of drastic social change, leads them naturally to join the right wing of the Social-Democratic party, to which most of them do actually belong. While the left-wing socialists work with the communists, the right-wing socialists follow in the wake of the Christian-Democratic party which the Roman Catholics count as their members. The predicament of the Protestants is that they must not lose themselves in revolutionary sentiments, which would bring upon them the charge of being communistic, and that would be fatal. On the other hand, they do not want to support the conservatives, conscious as they are of social injustices in so many respects.

Protestantism is native-born in Italy. The Waldensian is the oldest Protestant church in the world. Since 1948, when they were granted equal civil rights, they have spread from their settlements in the Alpine valleys of the north out over the whole land. They are about 60,000 in number—a number that would be much larger if it were not for extensive emigration to North and South America. This emigration is also one of the

reasons that is delaying the union of the Methodists with this church, for the Waldensians attach great importance to this name as a strong link with the small daughter-churches in South America. There are about 6,000 in the Methodist Church which is a union of churches resulting from British and American missions. The Baptist Church has about 7,000 members.

The Waldensians consider themselves to be the Protestant church of Italy, but at the same time they realize that they are unprotected. Under Mussolini they lived under the Law of Tolerated Religions, but this law has not been re-enacted since the liberation after the war. They are now dependent upon the local police regulations, but their real protection consists in the esteem with which they are regarded by the people. It is in this small group of Protestants that one should look for the true line of succession to the apostolic church, rather than in the splendor of St. Peter's Cathedral.

Through Church World Service, the American churches must send aid to these needy Italian churches. Pastors' salaries must be supplemented in order to lift them above the most primitive standards of living. Money is needed to repair and equip church buildings and institutions. Scholarships for theological students must be given. Printing paper for books and periodicals must be bought. Substantial help is deserved.

If you received the February, 1951, issue of **THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE** late, we are very sorry. It was due to the railroad embargo caused by the labor dispute.



# Protestantism In Belgium

By A. L. WARNSHUIS

*(Executive Director, Church World Service)*

**P**ROTESTANTS IN BELGIUM are an isolated minority. The Roman Catholic Church dominates the general situation. In Flanders especially the influence of the priests is very great. The Roman Catholic Christian People's Party can count on forty-five to fifty-five per cent of the votes at every election. The flourishing Roman Catholic University of Louvain, the boarding schools, and the Church press, greatly influence public opinion.

On the other hand, the religious culture of the people does not receive much attention, not even from their own priests. In a census every other question is asked excepting one pertaining to religion, and an honest statistical statement of the unchurched has never been ventured. In Roman Catholic lands this is often the case. Because in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism is never considered as an alternative, a breach with the Roman Catholic Church always signifies militant atheism. The present-day issues that awaken passionate interest, as, for example,

the decisions regarding the king or the subsidizing of private schools, are never debated upon their own merits, but are always considered as subordinate points in the never-ending struggle to reduce or to justify the influence of the Church upon public life.

At the time of the separation of Belgium from the Netherlands in 1830, it was barely possible to speak of any Protestant life in these southern provinces. So it is the more remarkable that the Protestants now, in spite of their numerical weakness (about one per cent of the population), hold a morally strong position. There is little anti-Protestant action, but rather the opposite. This is especially true among those for whom Roman Catholicism has lost its spiritual value, and who are friendly towards Protestantism.

Legally Belgium recognizes the complete equality of the Churches. Whether or not this toleration is credited to the Roman Catholics or is maintained in spite of them, the reality is a fact. Religious instruction in the higher schools, religious work in the army,

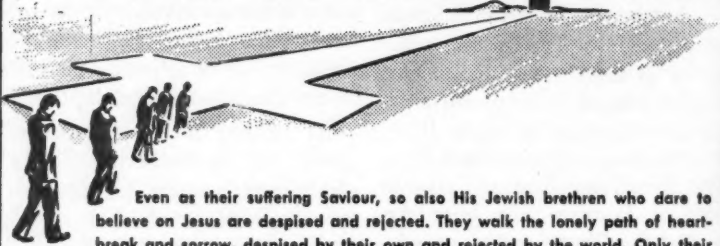


representation at all official ceremonies, everything is done on the basis of completely equal rights. However, this does not mean that any religious contact between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches can be assumed. On the contrary, whenever the Roman Catholic press pays any attention to Protestantism, this is done to make plain to the reader that Protestants are nothing more than a number of mutually antagonistic sects.

It must be frankly admitted that the weakness in the Protestant situation in Belgium is in part the result of divi-

sion. Fortunately it is now possible to speak of a measure of cooperation in a federation, which is a consequence of contact with the ecumenical movement that centers in Geneva. The two largest groups are the "Alliance of Protestant Evangelical Churches in Belgium" and the Missionary Churches. The first is a state Church in the sense that a large part of the financial support is provided by the state. Except for these financial relations, the Churches are completely free. Some contact with the Churches in the Netherlands is maintained, and a number

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of their ministers have come from Holland. The Missionary Churches include those aided by the American Methodists and those supported by "S.I.L.O.," a missionary society in Holland. Due to exchange restrictions that prevented the transfer of money from the Netherlands, S.I.L.O. has asked for and has received considerable aid from the American Churches given through Church World Service. Much of this missionary work is located in the Walloon provinces, and a considerable number of the ministers and evangelists are Swiss. Some financial aid also comes from Switzerland. Union of the Churches has seemed impossible up till now, because the Missionary Churches do not want any connection with the state.

Belgian Protestants believe that they now confront a great evangelistic opportunity if they can overcome a number of difficulties.

In Belgium, Protestantism is still considered to be an import of foreign origin. The Protestant Churches have not yet ventured to assume the financial burden of supporting a theological seminary of their own; but the disturbing fact is not that their ministers have been trained in the Netherlands or in Switzerland or in Paris or in Strasbourg, but that they are themselves foreigners. There are hardly any native Belgian clergy in the Protestant Churches.

As a consequence of historical developments, Protestantism is not root-

ed in the country districts, but continues to be principally a city matter. The opposition of the priests in the past, especially in Flanders, has made it difficult to contact the rural people. Moreover, in the cities the Protestants are scattered and distances make churchgoing difficult. In Antwerp and Brussels it costs a family of four at least three or four guilders to go to church.

The most serious difficulty is the isolation of the Protestants. They have no real part in Belgian political or cultural life. It is not that any actual handicaps are experienced, but the simple fact of being a Protestant places one in a different position and relationship in whatever is undertaken.

All these circumstances emphasize the importance of well-considered assistance to and cooperation with the Belgian Churches. The development of "Benelux" suggests closer relationships with the Churches in the Netherlands, which at the same time would assist the real Belgian character of these Churches to find expression in continuing responsibilities in cultural and political developments. The missionary opportunities call for assistance from the American Churches, but again that assistance must be given in such ways as will encourage the development of native initiative and responsibility. Such aid can probably be best given through Church World Service and the World Council of Churches.

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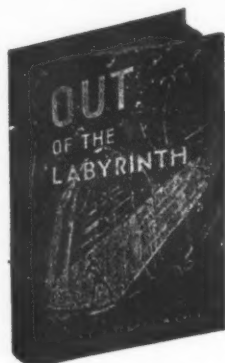
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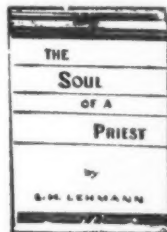
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